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THE EIGHTH DOLOR

by

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"Mending the Nets," "The Pale Galilean," etc.

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TO MY BROTHER

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The Eighth Dolor

TO speak of the "Eighth Dolor" may seem to many as heretical as to speak of the "Eleventh Commandment." Yet this unique title is but a new name for an old devotion—a devotion, however, that whilst the most beautiful and beneficient of all devotions to Mary Our Mother, has perhaps not as yet been treated of in the form and manner which the following pages essay.

No one has ever penetrated deeply into the Sacred Heart who has not entered by the portals of the sword-riven heart of Mary. Tradition and devotion have both conspired to limit the major sword-rents of that Immaculate Heart to seven. Yet paradoxical though it seem, the "Eighth Dolor" not only includes the other seven, but once we have caught its true significance, once our souls have reacted to its tragic sweetness, all the treasures of the Sacred Heart lie open before us. What then is the "Eighth Dolor"?

Do not think me guilty of literary chicanery if the answer is momentarily withheld, for the writer dares not leave even the faintest impression that he has found a long-hidden secret portal to the Sacred Heart. This crude attempt to sketch the beauty of the "Eighth Dolor" came about as follows:

Years ago, as a novice, the writer was seated one evening beneath the palms and olives of the beautiful grounds of the Sacred Heart Novitiate in far off California. The flickering filaments of the selfsame stars which glistened at the birth of the Infant Jesus,

still glowed golden above the little group of those who were beginning life in the Society that glories in His sweet Name.

There is a witchery in the majesty of night which dwarfs trivialities and seems to raise one's thoughts to things eternal. Laughter and small talk gradually died away. One young novice, ardent with all the buoyant virility of youth began to speak. Sitting on the fringe of the crowd, I listened to his naive enthusiasm. Perhaps the others of that group, perhaps even the speaker himself, now grown into manhood, have forgotten the incident, but somehow I felt like the disciples of Emmaus long ago as they listened to the Master, "was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke?"

Then I determined, if no worthier pen would essay the task, to repeat the substance of the novice's thoughts on the "Eighth Dolor" of the Blessed Virgin. The motto chosen by His Holiness for the 1928 Eucharistic Congress, "Our Lady and the Blessed Eucharist," has at length constrained me to transmute resolution into action, and so this little pamphlet is written in the hope that you too may feel your "heart burn within you."

For the title and basic idea of this booklet, the writer is under obligation to his fellow-religious above alluded to; for much of the preliminary argument used, he is deeply indebted to Blessed Père Eymard's writings.

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Feast of
St. John Berchmans
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The Cruelty of Christ

THE entire life of Jesus is a paradox; in fact, He Himself is the Supreme Paradox, being God and yet man. This dual nature of Christ ingratiates itself into every action of His life, but it is in His relationship with His Mother that it reaches an unique and almost baffling climax.

Since the distant yesterdays, when first we learned the story of Jesus and Mary, we have been wont, and rightly so, to reverence and imitate that tender manly love of Christ for His Blessed Mother. Nay more, we have learned, and perhaps are feebly attempting to carry out the truth, that we can become true lovers of Christ only by striving to be true children of Mary, His Mother. Yet from crib to Cross and beyond, Christ apparently was cruel towards His Mother. He, Lord of all things, forced her as a maiden to give birth to Him in a dank cave, an outcast from men. Scarce had His loving presence blunted this sorrow, when He, the Creator, forced His parents to flee from the wrath of a vile creature, to journey to a foreign land, to bear the heat and weariness of a desert trek, and to exchange home and all the memories that charmed word is freighted with, for an exile among pagans.

Again a short respite, and this homeless family is sternly ordered back to their home. For a few years peace and happiness reign, only to render more acute the cruelest of Mary's Seven Dolors—the loss of

her Son in Jerusalem. And so we could go on, tracing the sufferings inflicted by Jesus on the Co-Redemptrix.* Ah yes, the word "Co-Redemptrix" gives us the answer. Mary was to share Christ's Passion that she might share His glory. This truth partially solves the enigma.

Thus far we have been dealing almost with platitudes, with truths which even a cursory reflection upon the mission of Christ and the part His Mother was to play in that mission of Redemption makes patent to us all. Yet there remains to be considered a series of ugly facts which theorizing cannot bromide.

Four times Christ would seem to speak cruelly, almost truculently, to His Mother. A fifth time His action is such as to appear to be almost the refinement of cruelty. It is this fifth occasion which we shall presently treat of as the basis of the "Eighth Dolor."

Her eyes sunken and sleepless, her limbs wearied from days of fruitless search, her heart torn with the agony of the loss, not only of her only Son, but of Jesus her God, Our Blessed Mother fronts Christ calmly disputing with the Doctors of the Law. The pent up emotions of her great motherly heart burst the flood gates of her lips and she cries out, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

*The title "Co-Redemptrix," as applied to Mary, implies the special manner in which she was associated with the suffering of the Redeemer. It in no way implies that her sufferings were of the infinite value demanded for the expiation of sin, or that she, as a creature,—although in an especial way,—was not herself redeemed by the merits of Jesus, her Son.

Did ever a mother's heart need more keenly words of comfort, was there ever a son who would not have been moved to speech of consolation by such sorrow? And yet,—quietly, almost brusquely comes, what in other lads we would term the retort, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

The scene shifts. We are in the midst of the revelry of a marriage feast. Mary is there, mothering the sons of men, since she had lost her own Boy. Amid the jollity of an oriental celebration, He comes. Her great motherly heart, impulsively if you will, begs Him to relieve the embarrassment of their host. Again He fronts His Mother. His Sacred Heart, that volcano of love, seems in her presence like a frozen crater, and icily He seems to reprove her with the rebuff, "Woman what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come."

Again a change of scene. We find ourselves in a crowd which surrounds the young Nazarene as with masterful skill He confutes the Scribes. In the midst of the discourse, word is sent to Christ that His Mother has arrived and desires to see Him. What an opportunity to pay public tribute to His Blessed Mother! What an occasion to set an example of filial love of Mary unto all generations!

Yet again that apparent strange harshness of Jesus towards Mary asserts itself. Turning to the crowd who knew that His Mother was at hand, He exclaims, " 'Who is my Mother and my brethren?' And

looking about on them who sat about him, he saith, 'Behold my mother and my brethren'." Do not these words sound like another rebuff?

Again the scene shifts. It is Calvary, and we stand by the Mother of Sorrows and gaze up at that livid pulp which once was the fairest of the children of men. The sight rends the heart of even the most calloused of us sinners. We gaze from the agonizing face of that motionless Mother to the thorn-crowned figure of her Son. Surely the very thought of Christ on Calvary being cruel to that Mother who clings to His gibbet of infamy is in itself revolting. Yet——

List to those fever-livid lips which gasp forth the last word that Christ will ever address to His Mother upon earth. List,—like a blow the word falls, "Woman, behold thy son." Oh, the bitter heart-pang in that word "woman." Why, yes why, could He not at least have called her "Mother," that sacred title freighted with more emotion than any other word ever uttered by human lips? She, His Mother, clings to Him in His agony, shares with supreme heroism His Passion, and His farewell is to cast her aside as "Mother" and to term her "Woman."

This booklet has been written for lovers of Mary, and therefore the rather blunt phrasing of the incidents narrated above may be somewhat repugnant to many. Yet these facts have been deliberately selected, for a purpose soon to be disclosed. It is true that much of the seeming severity of Christ can be

explained by tracing the foregoing expressions back to their primitive tongue, as for example, "woman" in the oriental language connotes no lack of reverence or affection. We can go further and in a scene like the Crucifixion grasp somewhat the intent of Christ. On Calvary He terms Mary "Woman" to show how completely He has divested Himself of all things, even of His dearest treasure, His Mother, and has given her to us as our Mother.

We can delve deeper, and as before alluded to, partially understand Christ's actions, by remembering that He is the God-Man. Considering only His human nature, His words may seem offensive and devoid of filial love, but considering Him as God, as our Saviour, recalling that Mary is our Co-Redemptrix, then we grasp the fact that these apparently inexplicable words and deeds of Christ were but the cruelty of kindness, that Simeon's prophecy was realized, and Jesus truly was "a sign of contradiction."

Conceding, however, all of the foregoing, there is much that is mysterious in the few recorded details of the relationship of Jesus and Mary.

The most baffling fact in the life of our Blessed Mother will now be considered at length. What has been penned thus far is but a necessary introduction to help us to penetrate into the least known and most neglected, although, strange to say, the most beautiful and helpful period of the life of the Blessed Virgin, viz., the span which separated the Ascension and the Assumption.

The Climax of Cruelty

WE come now to a consideration of the sorrow of Our Blessed Mother which has been termed the "Eighth Dolor." Hesitantly, reverently, let us approach the subject for it is sacred soil we tread, nay, it is a path which shall lead us into the very Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It will be necessary, however, to preface our consideration by a brief summary of the fifth and final of the apparent cruelties of Christ toward Mary, His Mother.

Jesus in death reached, nay overreached, the peak of love. Yet the same Christ in death would seem to have inflicted on Mary the harshest of His cruelties. She had given birth to Him in a stable, she had shared His privations, together they had endured the Passion,—He, the Redeemer, she, the Co-Redemptrix! And now at last, from livid lips come the words, "It is consummated," and the valiant mother sighs with relief for the agony finally is ended. Ended? Yes, for Him, for He returns to Heaven where suffering is no more, but for her——?

Oh cruel kindness of Christ! Mary, your Mother, shared your suffering but, for twenty and perhaps more years after your Ascension, you refuse to share with her your glory. The pitiful loneliness of that exiled Immaculate Heart! She could "stand" beneath the Cross for you were present there, but to drag on for days, and months, and years without

you, surely it is hard for us to understand such an added burden of sorrow.

"Without you?" Ah, mayhap that is the secret of it all. Was Mary "without you"? Was there not one duty for the Co-Redemptrix to fulfill before she too could say "It is consummated"?

And, dear reader, the answer to these questions is the story of the "Eighth Dolor": the saddest, sweetest tie which binds Mary to Jesus, the sweetest, saddest tie which binds us to Jesus and Mary. Why such superlative praise? Let us calmly study together the nature and basis of this devotion; thus only can we determine if the above evaluation is merited.

We must first assume,—for a discussion would carry us too far afield,—that devotion to the dolors of Our Blessed Mother is the most meritorious of all devotions to the Blessed Virgin. Certainly those who have read the writings of the great lovers of Mary, or, better still, who have tried the experiment themselves, will not question this statement.

With this as a premise, our conclusion logically follows. It is precisely where the Seven Dolors end that the "Eighth" begins. Phrased in perhaps a more striking way, the "Eighth" is the only living dolor! In other words, all of the Seven Dolors, the object of so much meditation and reverence, are in a sense historical. They embrace events which terminated some nineteen hundred years ago. True, the merits flowing from these dolors, the practical lessons to be derived from meditating on the same, survive in all

their primal vigor, but are we not wont somehow to look upon them as historical events?

How often in books, in sermons, in Retreats, are not Christ and His Blessed Mother treated as historical figures? Be honest, and as you analyze the sermons you have heard or the books you have read of late, judge for yourself if this criticism is not justified. Yet Christ longs, longs with all the tremendous love of His Sacred Heart, to dwell with the children of men, not as a memory, but as a living personal Friend.

For this reason, Infinity in a divine excess of love instituted the Blessed Sacrament. We sinners could murder Christ, and we did, but He would thwart our infamy, He would defy history to entomb Him, and His Sacred Heart would beat not only in Galilee, but in every clime of this far-flung earth, in every age until time should be no more.

Christ would fling aside the winding sheet of history and live again,—live in our midst, nourish us, chat with us, inspire us. The Blessed Sacrament savors of eternity, for it destroys time, and perpetuates "the Galilean" of yesterday. The Christ of Bethlehem, of Nazareth, of Judea, of Golgotha is in our midst, a living, loving Exemplar. If we would imitate the poverty of Jesus, we need not go awandering through the centuries back to Bethlehem; if we would imitate His Hidden Life, there is no necessity of confining ourselves to Nazareth; if we would learn the lesson of suffering and of the

heinousness of sin, we need not cabin ourselves within memory's confine of Calvary. No, the true "School of Love," of Imitation of Christ, is to be found before the Tabernacle, wherein dwells the poor, the hidden, the outraged Eucharistic Sacred Heart.

With God there is no yesterday, but for all too many, the God-Man is a figure dimmed by twenty centuries of yesterdays. The Eucharistic Christ, however, is a living personage who dwells among us, nay, who for many privileged souls, daily abides in our hearts. This then is the great secret of our deathless Model and Exemplar.

And Mary? Is she also to be buried beneath twenty centuries of history's dust? Is she but a sweet memory which clings like perfume to the thought of Him who died on Calvary? No, it cannot be! "Ubi Jesus, ibi Mater." Wherever we find Christ, there too, we must find His Mother. Somehow (and certainly in no sense of physical presence in the Tabernacle), Mary must be associated with Jesus of the Blessed Sacrament; somehow the Immaculate Heart must have a share in the joys and especially the sorrows of the Eucharistic Sacred Heart.

Now at last we are drawing close to the sweet secret of the "Eighth Dolor." Sorrow is the radiance of motherhood. Christ's sufferings and sorrows on earth were shared by Mary, His Mother. But the Passion consisted not only of the Bloody Sweat, the Scourging, the Crucifixion, but above all, in the

anguish which rent the Sacred Heart. The keenest pang of all that Heart-anguish must have been the prescience of the coldness, the contempt, the outrages which would be committed against that Sacrament of Love which formed the prelude of the Passion.

Is Christ so cruel that He would refuse to share His supreme suffering with His Mother? Mary had never stinted her love, and the love of the Co-Redemptrix was synonymous with suffering. Is it conceivable that the two greatest devotions in the Church, viz., devotion to the Eucharistic Sacred Heart and devotion to the Blessed Mother should be distinct and disassociated? The cruel Jews sought to separate Son and Mother on Calvary, but just as Jesus triumphed over death, so too has He bridged the unnatural barrier which would separate His Eucharistic sufferings from the swords of sorrow which pierced His Mother's Immaculate Heart.

How Eucharistic reparation and Mary's sorrows are welded together is the story of

The Eighth Dolor

LET us pause here and take bearings for we are furrowing an almost uncharted sea. First let us attempt to formulate a definition. The "Eighth Dolor," considered in itself, may be defined as that dolor or sorrow which the Blessed Virgin Mary suffered by reason of the outrages which mankind would commit against the Blessed Sacrament. Considered as a devotion, it is of course our study, and love, and compassion for this sorrow of the Immaculate Heart, and especially that childlike trait of finding in Mother Mary our guide and our exemplar for all our spiritual life, and above all for the very heart of that life, true devotion to the Eucharistic Sacred Heart.

To forestall objection, let us here answer a few difficulties. Is this a new devotion? Certainly it is no more recent or novel than the cultus of the Sacred Heart. But why introduce the Blessed Mother into the devotion of the Blessed Sacrament? Answer for yourself, dear reader. Why introduce the Mother of Sorrows into the Passion of her Son? Each suffered acutely, bitterly, as individuals, but both suffered with an agonizing intensity because of each other. The microscope of meditation may separate the sorrows of each sufficiently for isolated consideration, but for most of us, the sufferings of Jesus and Mary are indissoluble, and if I may borrow a thought "what God has joined together let no man

put asunder." Saints have always entered into the Heart of God by the sword-riven rent of the Immaculate Heart. Surely then, we sinners would do well to enter by the same portal.

Those reading the preceding, may perhaps challenge the parity between the co-suffering of the Blessed Mother and the Saviour during the Passion, and their co-suffering because of the outrages committed against the Sacrament of Love.

Since this is the crux of the entire devotion of the "Eighth Dolor," we must not be content to rely on the presumption developed in the preceding pages, namely, that because Jesus and Mary were united in so many dolors, therefore it is befitting that they should share the Eucharistic Sorrows.

We set out to seek an adequate explanation of Christ's apparent cruelty in exiling His Mother upon earth for a score of years. In the foundation of a true and solid devotion, presumptions have little place, although in treating of the Blessed Mother we might always rely on the famous words of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, "When an opinion is in some way honorable to the Blessed Virgin and there is some foundation for it, provided it is not otherwise repugnant to Faith, to the Decrees of the Church, nor to truth,—not to hold and even to contradict it, for the reason that the contrary opinion may also be true, is to show little devotion to the Mother of God." Fortunately however, both intrinsic evidence and weighty authority,—and authority not of vision-

aries, but of such illustrious scholars as Suarez, Liguori, etc.,—furnish us with convincing proof. Let us proceed then as the soul functions, *i.e.*, let the intellect first consider the truth, then let each heart unfetter itself and react as love dictates towards the "Eighth Dolor."

Basis of the Devotion

FIRST, there is the fundamental truth: Mary is the Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore, since the Blessed Sacrament contains the Body and Blood of Jesus, Mary is indissolubly linked with the Blessed Sacrament. That selfsame Body formed of the virginal flesh and blood of Mary is dwelling today in our tabernacles. Little wonder then that through the groined arches of stately cathedrals as well as in the dank hut of some mission chapel, the Church still intones the words, "Ave verum, Corpus natum, de Maria Virgine" ("Hail, true Body of the Saviour, born of the Virgin Mary"). Little wonder that Saint Augustine exclaims, "The Flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary, and the Saviour gives us this flesh of Mary to eat unto our salvation."

A moment ago, it was stated that we would rely in this discussion on the impassionate statements of the great theological intellects. It is difficult to forbear, however, from quoting one private revelation. It is one little known, perhaps even to many of the sons of the Order founded by this great Saint. Of all the canonized, few perhaps are distinguished by such a fund of common sense as Ignatius of Loyola. His practical-mindedness has been tersely termed, "A Standard Oil business brain, born three centuries out of time." Yet the following is authentically recorded. "As I was preparing to ascend the altar,

and afterward, when, being clothed with the sacred vestments, I was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, I experienced a violent interior shock, accompanied by abundant tears and sobs, and at times even by the loss of speech. Then I felt, nay, I saw the Blessed Virgin exercising her influence with the Father in my behalf, so that during the Canon and the Consecration of the Mass, I could neither see nor feel anything, excepting her who is, so to say, a part of this immense grace and the gate by which we arrive at it. By a spiritual perception, I understood that she showed me in the Act of Consecration the existence of her own flesh in the Flesh of her own dear Son, that is to say that which had been formed of her virginal substance. The perception of what had been revealed to me was so interior that I cannot express it."

Thus it is clear, that throughout this entire discussion, we must rivet to our minds the fact that the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was formed from the virginal flesh and blood of Mary. Let not this thought remain a cold intellectual abstraction! When Jesus comes to you in Holy Communion, let your heart flood with love of Mary, whose virginal substance gave you the Body and Blood of Jesus for your spiritual nourishment. This one thought opens up a vista of meditation as illimited as the perfections of Him who dwells in the Sacrament of Love.

Mary, therefore, by having given unto us the

Sacred Body of Him who perpetuates Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, shares in a certain sense in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. But this connection between Mary and the Eucharistic Heart is too recondite. Are there not nearer and clearer reasons to adduce?

Let us consider three points, briefly however, for in a treatise such as this, much, very much must be left to the individual reader perusing the same.

First, the Blessed Sacrament is not only a perpetuation of Jesus Christ, the God-Man, but, if one may so speak, especially of Jesus Christ, the Saviour. By that is meant, that in a particular manner the Holy Eucharist is, as the Church so beautifully sings at Benediction, "a memorial of the Passion." True, we may consider the Prisoner of Love as the helpless Babe of Bethlehem, as the model son at Nazareth, as the bronzed wayfarer of Galilee, but we must ever remember that Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament in the glorified state or condition in which He left this earth. Therefore He is present in the Blessed Sacrament "bruised for our iniquities, wounded for our sins." The mangled, gory figure of Calvary is the Prisoner of the Tabernacle! The welts and wounds are radiant now with glory, though hid by the snowy white species of bread, which mercifully hides our iniquity, like "the pity of the snow which hides all scars."

Secondly, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament are indissolubly connected. The

Victim hid under the species of Bread and Wine is the Victim of Calvary. The Mass is not an historical pageant; it is not a mere symbolic representation of Golgotha's deicide; it is the selfsame sacrifice which was perfected on the first Good Friday. The Host consumed by the priest, the Host we receive into our hearts, although the appearances of bread are really distinct, yet contains the self-same Christ received by the Apostles at the Last Supper. These are tremendous mysteries, so mysterious, so tremendous, as to test the faith of us all, and yet they are basic to, nay, they are the sweetest consolations of, our faith.

Bearing the truth in mind, that the Mass is the Unbloody Calvary, that the same Victim Jesus Christ is offered up on our altars daily, hourly, we have but to recall Mary's part in the Passion and Death of her Son, we have but to analyze her merited title of Co-Redemptrix, and a mystery which baffles pen to portray lies open before us. Like one of the great wonders of nature, as for example, the Grand Canyon, description but makes mockery of its beauty and sublimity.

Gradually we are approaching the proof of the "Eighth Dolor." Before establishing the final link, let us briefly consider one other argument.

Maria Mediatrix

THROUGHOUT the Church today, an ever increasing devotion is being manifested toward Mary as the Mediatrix of All Graces. Many there are who desire that this truth be confirmed as a dogma. Not only has it been the almost universal tradition of the Church, as Saint Thomas, Suarez, Ligouri, Bernard, and so many others attest, that "through Mary comes to us all the grace, created and uncreated, that the world has ever received or will ever receive," but the Church itself has set its official sanction on this devotion by designating the last day of the month of May, as the Feast of "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces."

The testimony not only of the great lovers of Mary but of the great theologians concerning this office of Our Heavenly Queen is too well known to require development. Rather let us consider what is to be deduced from this truth.

Mary is the Dispenser and Mediatrix of All Graces. But the greatest of graces is the Blessed Sacrament. Therefore Mary is not only the dispenser and our mediatrix for all the graces which we now receive from the Blessed Sacrament, but moreover to her we owe in a certain sense the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

This tremendous truth is to be understood not only in the light that Mary gave unto us the Flesh

and Blood of Jesus which was to constitute the Blessed Sacrament, but also that the very institution of the Sacrament of Love is partially attributable to Mary, in the sense of the words of Albertus Magnus which we have already quoted, viz., "Through Mary comes to us all the grace the world has ever received." Was not the greatest grace which the world ever received its Redemption, and that Redemption perpetuated in the Sacrament of the Altar?

The deeper we delve into the intimate relationship between our Blessed Redeemer and His Blessed Mother, our Co-Redemptrix, the more intimate and interlinked becomes their Eucharistic association. Let us now add the final links in our chain of argument.

We set out to prove that Mary has been a co-sufferer with Jesus because of the outrages committed against Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Thus far we have seen the intimate connection between the Sacrament of the Altar and Mary, first, as the Mother of the Prisoner of Love, secondly, as the Co-Redemptrix who suffered in that Redemption which is perpetuated by means of the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and finally, as the Mediatrix of All Graces and therefore of all Eucharistic graces, nay, as some assert, of the grace of the Eucharist itself. Now let us link these facts with the question often alluded to, but as yet unanswered, viz., why was our Blessed Mother exiled for twenty or more years on earth after the death of Jesus, her Son?

The Model of Adorers

TRUE, we cannot pierce the veil of Omniscence and give a complete response. This much we can affirm and maintain, among other reasons: the climax of the apparent cruelties of Christ was permitted in order that Mary might become the Model of Eucharistic Adorers.

Perhaps such a statement may seem a pious figment, an emotional pabulum for mystics and visionaries, but surely not a demonstrable fact upon which to build a sturdy devotion. Let us not be too hasty. Many are under the delusion that the post-Ascension period of Mary's life is an historical blank. Let us examine into this question.

Two points will be established, and from these, Mary's title of "Model of Eucharistic Adorers" irrefutably flows. Space will not permit lengthy quotations from the witnesses enumerated, and therefore only the substance of their testimony will for the most part be set forth.

First, Holy Mass was offered up daily in the Apostolic Church and therefore during the final days of Mary's sojourn on earth. We have the recorded statement of the Apostle Saint Andrew, "Every day I offer Sacrifice to God Almighty." Saint Ireneus tells us, that "The Lord commanded us to offer the Sacrifice of the Altar without intermission." Tertullian and Saint Jerome offer evidence even more specific.

The truth that the early Christians of the Apostolic Church received Holy Communion frequently, if not daily, is supported by overwhelming evidence. The famous text from the Acts of the Apostles is well known, "And they were persevering in the communion of the breaking of the bread," or as the Syriac version has it, "the breaking of the Eucharist." Saint Paul's often quoted condemnation of the abuses in the reception of Holy Communion which had crept in among the Corinthians strengthens the Scriptural proof. Saint Clement and Saint Denis adduce further testimony.

Moreover it was the custom in the time of the Apostles that all should receive Holy Communion as often as they were present at Holy Mass. The evidence of Saint Anacletus, Tertullian, Saint Cyril, Saint Ambrose, and Saint Augustine, and of course, the splendid argumentation of Suarez, removes this truth from the realm of doubt.

The conclusion to be drawn by us is obvious. If Holy Mass was offered daily, if daily Communion was practiced by those who attended Mass in the Apostolic age, then surely our Blessed Mother frequently, if not daily, received Jesus into her virginal heart.

It seems almost callous to treat of such a fact in a purely argumentative way. One would pen the thousand and one thoughts jostling in the mind at the very prospect of the Eucharistic union of Jesus and Mary. Here, however, we are establishing fact.

Devotional consequences must await their proper place for discussion.

If Mary is the Model of Eucharistic Adorers, it must be conceded that she was such in the true and fullest significance of the term. To truly adore the Blessed Sacrament, it is not sufficient merely to be thankful that Christ has found His "delight to dwell among the children of men." True devotion consists in piercing the mystic veils, and penetrating into the sorrows of the Sacred Heart. Reparation for the outrages committed against the Sacrament of Love is of the very essence of a true lover and adorer of the Holy Eucharist.

Just as no other ever penetrated as deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, just as no other ever loved and sorrowed as keenly as Mary, so too, no other ever penetrated as deeply into the Eucharistic sorrows as our Immaculate Queen.

Let us take the same idea from a different angle. It is maintained by the almost universal testimony of commentators on the Blessed Virgin, that every sorrow which Christ underwent in His Passion and Death was known to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But the deepest grief which tortured the soul of Jesus, that which perhaps above all else caused the Bloody Sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, was the suffering which Jesus was to undergo in that Sacrament of Love which but a few hours before He had instituted. Therefore Mary, co-suffering with Jesus in His Passion, knew and grieved over the

Eucharistic outrages which so deeply would wound the Heart of Christ.

Jesus glorified in Heaven can no longer suffer. There, in the lonely solitude of the vale of Gethsemane, in the white robe of the fool before Herod,—oh, symbol of the folly of the little white Host,—in the torture chamber of Pilate, on Golgotha which chaliced the Blood of the Saviour, there were suffered the pangs which rent the Sacred Heart for all the coldness, and ingratitude, and outrages which would ever be committed against the Blessed Sacrament. But Mary shared all these sorrows of the Passion. Therefore the Mother of Sorrows, our Co-Redemptrix, shared the Eucharistic sorrows of the Sacred Heart.

Who will then deny to Mary, the love, the condolence, the wanly sweet prerogative of "Our Lady of the Eighth Dolor"?

Let us summarize briefly the foregoing. Our Blessed Mother is most intimately related to the Blessed Sacrament. Her virginal flesh and blood gave unto us the Body and Blood of the Eucharistic Saviour. She, as the Mediatrix of all Graces, must of necessity be linked with, not only the greatest source of all graces, but the greatest of graces itself, —The Sacrament of Love. Mary is the Co-Redemptrix of the human race, and therefore as Co-Redemptrix she shared the sorrows of the Passion of Jesus. But among these sorrows one of the most poignant, if not the bitterest of all, was the grief and

anguish of heart which the Eucharistic Sacred Heart was to suffer in all lands and throughout all ages. Therefore Mary knew and co-suffered with Jesus these Eucharistic Sorrows.

For twenty years Mary dwells upon earth, receiving, perhaps daily, her Divine Son clad in sacramental robes. Thus she becomes not only the great exemplar of the dolors of the Blessed Sacrament, but above all, the model of those who have learned the dearest, sweetest secret of the Sacred Heart—reparation for the outrages committed against the Sacrament of Love.

As we ponder over the traditional "Seven Dolors" of Mary as portrayed by those who have delved deep into that abyss of sorrow, our souls are crushed and our hearts overwhelmed by the terrible anguish of the Blessed Mother's grief.

Let us not belittle the grief of the Immaculate Heart pulsing in agony at the foot of the cross. Oh, but what is death, even the death of Golgotha, compared to living death—to the Eucharistic sufferings which perpetuate Golgotha adown the centuries, which multiply Calvary throughout every land, and city, and village.

Grasp the immensity of the mystery of the Sacrament of Love, and you have grasped the immensity of the "Eighth Dolor"; let prayer and suffering teach you the bitter heart-anguish of the Sacred Heart, and you have learned the secret of the Eucharistic Dolor of Mary.

But since we should not so much seek Mary through Jesus, as Jesus through Mary, so, if we would enter into the secrets of the Sacred Heart, we must first go to Mary and beg of her to confide to us the latent mysteries of love and suffering which pulse within the Heart of Jesus. With childlike simplicity we must turn to our Blessed Mother and ask to know, and knowing, to love, and loving, to share the pangs of the "Eighth Dolor," the saddest and sweetest, the most precious and poignant of those which have won for her the noblest of her titles—Mother of Sorrows.

Practice of the Devotion

THUS far we have spoken of the nature of the "Eighth Dolor." To do so required but a slight expenditure of intellectual industry. To discuss however, the practical side of this devotion, viz., how to carry it into our lives, how to penetrate the innermost recesses of the Sacred Heart by entering through the Portal of the Dolorous Heart of Mary,—all this requires heart rather than head, love rather than argument.

Sincerely conscious of his limitations, the author shall simply point the path. It is best, nay necessary, to traverse it alone. The secrets of the Sacred Heart must be spoken only in the intimate privacy of our own hearts. To act otherwise would be profane.

In general, this is to be said. Whatever pertains to the devotion to the Sacred Heart pertains likewise to devotion to the "Eighth Dolor," but just as the Sacred Heart came to us by Mary, so we must go to the Sacred Heart by Mary. Is there aught you would ask of the Prisoner of Love, then ask it through Mary, for she is the Dispenser of all His Eucharistic graces. Is there aught you would offer to the Sacred Heart, then offer it through Mary, for our gifts, like diamonds covered with the clay of earth, will become gleaming gems only when purified and polished within her dolorous heart. Is there aught you would know of the outrages committed against the Sacrament of Love, oh, from whom but from her, who

in her "Eighth Dolor" knew the bitter grief of that outraged Heart, can you learn the secret?

"To Jesus via Mary" has been the pathway of all lovers of the Crucified. Just as the famous "El Camino Real,"—The King's Highway,—the trail the padres of California trod in their search for souls, is marked by picturesque mission bells, so the highway to the throne of the King of Kings is marked by the swords of sorrow of our Immaculate Queen. There is no safer, surer course. If you have but the love and courage to traverse the sorrow-strewn trail you will find at last the Portal,—the Eucharistic suffering of the Queen of Martyrs.

But these are general thoughts. Let us now consider a few practical details. Advisedly is said "a few," for the subject is as vast as human activity. Every deliberate action of our lives is fraught with relationship to God and thus can be channelled into Eucharistic Reparation. By way of illustration, however, one point will be touched upon, for it is the most universally practiced devotion to the Sacred Heart. We shall find much religious nourishment even in this single theme: other considerations must be left to the individual reader. It has been the aim of the writer more to outline and establish the "Eighth Dolor," than, at least in this booklet, to discuss the tremendous practical significance. He feels, that if you have been interested enough to read thus far, you are sufficiently acquainted with the Euchar-

istic life of the Prisoner of the Tabernacle to develop the devotion unaided.

Let us therefore discuss "The Morning Offering" of the Apostleship of Prayer—that great link which binds together over thirty million lovers of the Sacred Heart. We are wont to say it upon arising, and thus recited, perhaps in a sleepy routine manner, to often miss the full significance of its meaning.

Note how the opening words confirm the subject of this little treatise, "Oh, Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, etc." Daily, as you recite this prayer, you are linking the Eucharistic Sacred Heart and our Blessed Mother. Now that you realize more clearly the intimate connection between the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Immaculate, let not these words be uttered mechanically for they should now teem with a new significance.

You continue, "I offer all my prayers, works, and sufferings." Let us be blunt and very practical. When the day's "prayers and works and sufferings" are over, would you wish to meet our Blessed Mother in person? Could you unabashed knock at the door of the Tabernacle of Nazareth, and, as Mary greeted you, tell her you have brought as presents for Jesus, this act or that act? Is there not much you would fain hide? Are "your prayers, your works, your sufferings" such that if you were to bring them "all" to Mary as a gift for her Son, some of them would not cause you to blush?

Think it over. Sentimental love of the Sacred

Heart is a poor gold-leaf to cover the baser metal of one's daily life, which too often gives the lie to our Morning Offering.

We offer "all our prayers." Whether this include the meditation and vocal prayers of a religious, or the scanty prayers of a busy person of the world, the question we must ask ourselves is, do we really "pray"? Prayers are not, or should not be, mere formulae, simply memory lessons of someone else's ideas. If a friend visits you, would you enjoy his company if he read at you out of a book or rattled off a series of quotations? No—you want to chat. So does the Friend of Friends, Jesus Christ.

"Chatting" is informal, familiar. Thus Mary prayed, and thus Jesus wants us to pray. He wants respect but He dislikes formality. We find it hard to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament because we attempt to be unnatural, but it is only by chatting, by being natural, that we can ever hope to be supernatural!

There is the language of the lips and the language of hearts. One does not need a college degree to excel in the latter. The subject is too vast to be covered in this little treatise, but when we pray, and especially when we kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, let us beg of Mary to pray as she prayed, beginning from the time when for nine months Jesus dwelt in her womb, until that wondrous period of her Eucharistic life, when the Risen Saviour dwelt daily in her heart. How calm and tensionless, how

simple and unaffected, how devoid of self, was her prayer.

Note that last element, "devoid of self." Just check back over your prayers of the last week or month. Prescind from those said out of duty or routine, and just analyze those of your own making. Were not most of them a petition for this or that personal favor? To seek help and strength from the Eucharistic Heart is good and praiseworthy, if—we do not stop there! Does not the Morning Offering say, "I offer my prayers, etc., for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart"?

How puny, how trivial, our trials and necessities are when measured by the desires and sorrows of the Sacred Heart. As you read these lines, just make a mental note of your own worries and see how they are stunted by the following, which after all are but a mite of the Eucharistic sorrows of Jesus.

Today, each twenty-four hours, approximately 130,000 people will die. Each of these souls is destined for heaven or hell. How many have tossed away the fruits of the Redemption, how many will die in mortal sin? We know not the number, but that many, very many, will perish eternally, is only too certain.

As we kneel in prayer, perhaps a thousand souls hang on the verge of eternity. Can we not forget self and hear the plaintive plea of the Saviour, "I thirst." How dear each soul on the death-bed is to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus! Let us unfetter our

prayers from self, let them be offered up, as we daily pledge, "for the intentions of His Sacred Heart." Christ cannot be outdone in generosity, and so we need have little fear that our personal needs will be neglected.

Oh, but what a tiny mite this fact is in the mighty tide of the burdens of the Sacred Heart. There are the billion and more pagans who refuse to recognize Him as their God. Can you grasp the immensity of that appalling number? Some one has tried to make this thought more tangible by the following illustration. "Placed shoulder to shoulder, they (the pagans) would form a line 400,000 miles long or seventeen times around the earth. Passing a single point in single file, one per second, day and night without ceasing, it would take thirty-one and a half years for the hideous procession to go by."

Then there are the hundreds of millions who mask under the name of Christians, but of whom so vast a number reject the Divinity of Jesus, or if they concede this point, reject any belief in His Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

What a void this leaves in the All-loving Heart of Jesus! What a grief to Mary His Mother! When men had tortured Jesus unto death, His only revenge was to give unto mankind—His Mother. Yet how many billions have known not her sweet maternal care, how many have contemptuously cast her aside for women whose lives were the incarnation of the

very vices, of whose contrary virtues, Mary stands as the great exemplar.

We have touched upon some of the sorrows of the Eucharistic Heart, and consequently of the Dolorous Heart of Mary, caused by pagan and heretical peoples; but what of Catholics?

We shall not speak of those who have ceased to receive the Sacraments, of those who have fallen for the first time into mortal sin, of those who fling away Christ's call unto priesthood or sisterhood, of those unhappy few who pledged by vow unto special service, violate their plighted troth, or who may be tempted to exchange poverty, chastity, and obedience, for the pleasures of the flesh, the glamour of gold, and the tang of liberty, of those who, as it were, renew the cruel scourging by their impurities and bestiality, of those who never drop in to console the Eucharistic Heart, nay, even after He has pleaded with men to come unto Him at least on the First Friday of the month.

These facts and many another are all too evident about us, although we are prone to forget them when we kneel before the Blessed Sacrament. Rather let us touch upon, for the subject is too repellent to go into minutely, the direct outrages committed against the Sacrament of Love.

Have you read much of the details of history? If you have, then you know somewhat of the sacrileges committed against the Blessed Sacrament. If you are not informed on these matters, perhaps it is well.

Suffice it here to say that there have been and are men and women who receive the all-pure Body and Blood of Jesus into hearts filthy with the most sordid of sins. There have been, and thank God the number is few, priests who, in mortal sin, have daily offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There are other direct outrages which are too abominable to recount. They have existed, they do exist, and it is well in a general way to think occasionally of them, for when we realize how deeply they grieve the dear Christ, self is forgotten and every fibre of our love clamors to repair the injuries done and to console the Sacred Heart. Who is the "Consoler of the Afflicted"? Is it not Mary? Ah then, from her we must petition and learn the sweet duty of reparation and consolation.

Lest our thoughts in these matters remain mere generalities, perhaps it may be permitted to recount an incident to be found in one of the volumes of Pastor's "Lives of the Popes." It shocks, but it is tellable.

During the sack of Rome, early in the sixteenth century, the invaders dressed a donkey up in Cardinal's robes. Riotously leading the beast into a church, the infamous soldiery commanded the priest to administer Holy Communion to the animal. When the priest courageously refused, he was hacked to pieces.

Such an incident causes one to recoil in horror, yet worse outrages have been committed against the

Sacrament of Love, and lest this generation pride itself on being "holier-than-thou," let it be bluntly stated that even more vicious and sacrilegious acts have been committed in our own day.

But enough of this sordidness. Do you wonder that Jesus from His Tabernacle begs and pleads for Reparation? Do you marvel at the Bloody Sweat in the solitude of Gethsemane? Can you still doubt that the bitterest of Mary's sorrows was her prescience of the Eucharistic sufferings of Jesus?

Oh how illimitable this subject is. We began to analyze just the first few words of a simple little prayer which we hastily and often distractedly recite each morning, and what a wealth of spirituality has been uncovered.

Simply by way of illustration of the practical application of this Dolor, it was the writer's intention to analyze "the Morning Offering" but the first few words of this prayer have more than exhausted the allotted space. The rest must be left to you, the reader of these lines.

Analyze the expression, "my works." The field is even vaster, for our prayers are cabined in by necessity, but our "works" run throughout the entire day.

Analyze "my sufferings." The expression almost tempts one to lay aside the determination to bring this booklet to a close. One caution however should be inserted. Be practical! Suffering is the very essence, yea, the crown of reparation. It includes not

only the thousand and one trials of life whose friction chafes and nettles the soul, but it embraces also the restraints of virtue. "Suffering" it is, to restrain tongue, and eyes, and tendencies; "suffering" it is, to restrain thought, and judgment, and desire; "suffering" it is above all, to suffer cheerfully. Because you are a lover of the Mother of Sorrows, because your heart pulses with desire to repair the Eucharistic outrages, do not think you must be morbid. Suffering which through morbidity finds not expression in smiles and laughter and diffusion of cheerfulness, is void of value for reparation toward the Sacred Heart. When your heart is bleeding from swords of affliction, then above all, beg of Mary the grace to hide your grief as she was wont to do in Nazareth long ago, where smiles were oft the language of the Man of Sorrows and the Mother of Dolors.

It seems almost sacrilegious not to discuss Mary as the Model of those who frequently visit the Blessed Sacrament, of those who make the Holy Hour, and especially of those who are wont to offer up Communions of Reparation.

Yet even if space permitted, it would on the contrary be almost sacrilegious to treat of these sacred duties. If you have grasped the nature and the beauty of the "Eighth Dolor," then you realize that, not from the writer, but from Mary must you learn the secret of making well your visits, your vigils, your Communions of Reparation. Many and varied are Mary's motherly duties, but that which pleases her

most is to teach her children to properly perform those duties which were dearest to her heart, because they were dearest to the Eucharistic Heart of her Divine Son.

This booklet is as it were but an advertisement for the "School of Eucharistic Love." Its purpose is fulfilled when you have enrolled as pupils of the most lovable of Alma Maters, — Mary, Mater Dolorosa.

And so, dear reader, I leave you alone with Mary. Ask her to accompany you into the presence of her Divine Son. As you kneel in the hush of the sanctuary, though your heart may seem as cold as the prison walls of His tabernacle, if you but beg of her who endured the "Eighth Dolor" to teach you to adore as she adored, to love as she loved, to compassionate as she compassionated, then faith shall pierce the Eucharistic veils. Reverently yet passionately, with the ardent emotion of Mary, you shall then embrace His Sacred Heart. The thorns which surround It, you will twine round your own heart; the cross which surmounts It, will be transferred to your own shoulders, and from the flames which surge from Its depth, you shall enkindle the waning fires of your love.

Call it not emotionalism! Such devotion is essentially practical. The thorns will subdue the clamoring flesh, the cross will teach you to bear cheerfully, courageously your trials, and the flames which emanate from the Heart of Christ, shall transform

you into an Apostle of love, of charity, of the Kingdom of Jesus and Mary.

Dear Mother of the Eucharistic Christ, we long to know the Heart of your Son, we long to atone for the outrages committed against the Sacrament of His Love, we long to compassionate your heart rent by the "Eighth Dolor."

During the twenty years of your Eucharistic life, Mother Mary, you became the Model and Exemplar of adoration and reparation of the Sacred Heart. Give us your spotlessness of soul, give us your flaming love, give us your courage to suffer, give us your passion for souls.

Teach us to solace Jesus when we kneel before His Tabernacle, teach us to share His sorrows when His Heart rests on ours in Holy Communion, and oh teach us, dear Mother, to carry emotion into action, to so shape every act of our lives, "our prayers, our works, our sufferings," that they may repair in some small way Christ's Eucharistic sufferings. Give us calm, patient, cheerful, sturdy love. In a word, give us thy heart, for a heart less loving than thine is scarce worthy of the Sacred Heart,—a heart more loving is impossible to creatures.

* * *

Eja, Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

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